

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 08528 171711Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----022998 171714Z /41

O 171643Z NOV 77
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3940
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

S E C R E T AMMAN 8528

EXDIS

AIDAC

DEPARTMENT PASS J. WHEELER, AID/AA/NE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, EAID, IS, JO, US
SUBJECT: MAQARIN DAM WATER RIGHTS - JORDANIAN WRITTEN COMMENTS

REF: (A) AMMAN 8527, (B) AMMAN 8529, (C) AMMAN 8522

1. WRITTEN JORDANIAN RESPONSE COVERING ISRAELI REACTION
TO DRAFT WORKING PAPER ON MAQARIN DAM ISSUES CABLED REF. B.
REF. A REPORTED ON TAUBENBLATT/EMBASSY/AID DISCUSSIONS
WITH GOJ OFFICIALS NOV. 05-17 AND PROVIDED COMMENTS ON
GOJ REACTIONS. REF. C. SETS FORTH PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR
TRANSMITTING JORDANIAN COMMENTS TO ISRAEL AND FOR MEETING
WITH ALON AND KANTOR, ET AL ON NOV. 21 AFTER TAUBENBLATT,
AID/NE/CD RETURNS TO ISRAEL. FOLLOWING ARE EMBASSY AMMAN
AND TAUBENBLATT COMMENTS ON WRITTEN JORDANIAN
RESPONSE.

2. OVERALL GOJ WRITTEN RESPONSE APPEARS TO BE USEFUL BASIS
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FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH GOI IN TRYING TO NARROW
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PARTIES AND MEETS POINT WHICH
AMBASSADOR LEWIS AND EMBASSY TEL AVIV HAVE MADE IN THE
PAST, THAT GOJ BE ENCOURAGED TO PRESENT THEIR OWN, WRITTEN
RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED BY ISRAELIS.

3. WE SEE JORDANIAN WRITTEN RESPONSE AS REFLECTION OF

THEIR CONCERNS WITH RESPECT TO 25 MCM VERSUS 40 MCM ISSUE, THE WEST BANK STUDY AND THE IDEA OF DIRECT TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS WITH GOJ. JORDANIANS PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THEIR RELATIONS WITH SYRIA AND OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES WERE THEY TO ENTER INTO DIRECT TECHNICAL TALKS (PRIOR TO GENEVA) DURING PRESENT UNCERTAIN PHASE IN ARAB-ISRAELI RELATIONS AND UNDERTAKE WEST BANK STUDY WHICH WOULD ENTAIL SOME COORDINATION WITH ISRAEL. JORDANIAN OFFICIALS FEAR THAT DIRECT TALKS AND WEST BANK STUDY COULD BOOMERANG IF ISRAELIS DID NOT MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY OF MEETINGS OR SOMEHOW THEY BECAME KNOWN. WITH RESPECT TO 25 MCM VERSUS 40 MCM ISSUE, GOJ INSISTS THAT GOING BEYOND 25 MCM WOULD RAISE SERIOUS QUESTIONS WITH RESPECT TO MAQARIN DAM PROJECT FEASIBILITY AND MAY RESULT IN ARAB DONORS WHO ARE BEING COUNTED ON TO MAKE LARGE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS, ABANDONING THE PROJECT, BECAUSE THEY DO NOT WISH TO EXCEED JOHNSTON PLAN 25MCM, A FIGURE WHICH THEY HAVE CLEARLY NOT FORGOTTEN.

4. GOJ FORMULATION OF 17 MCM FIGURE IN TEXT OF WRITTEN RESPONSE IS COUNTERWIEGHT TO GOJ REQUEST FOR 40 MCM IN THEIR WRITTEN RESPONSE. ABDULLAH AND ODEH ADVISED THAT 25 MCM IS MAXIMUM FIGURE FOR YARMOUK TRIANGLE WHICH GOJ CANNOT EXCEED. REACHING AGREEMENT ON 25 MCM FIGURE IS MOST IMPORTANT TO GOJ SINCE HARZA FEASIBILITY STUDY MUST BE COMPLETED PRIOR
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TO DONORS MEETING IN MARCH 1978 AND WATER AVAILABILITY TO THE TRIANGLE COULD AFFECT PROJECT FEASIBILITY, INCLUDING DAM HEIGHT, COSTS AND DIRECT BENEFITS TO JORDAN.

5. WITH RESPECT TO WEST BANK STUDY, GOJ SEES FEASIBILITY STUDY OF SECOND DAM DOWNSTREAM FROM MAQARIN AS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WEST BANK STUDY OR SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS AND CONVEYANCE APPROACHES, BECAUSE SECOND DAM WILL PROVIDE PRIMARY BASIS FOR PROVIDING WEST BANK GHOR AND ZOR WATER. GOJ HAS CONCURRED AS FALLBACK POSITION THAT U.S. MIGHT CONTRACT FOR WEST BANK STUDY WHICH U.S. WOULD UNDERTAKE FOR BOTH PARTIES. THIS COULD PROVIDE BASIS FOR REACHING AN UNDERSTANDING ON THIS KEY ISSUE ABOUT WHICH BOTH PARTIES FEEL VERY STRONGLY. SINCE STUDY WAS IN EFFECT U.S. COUNTERPROPOSAL TO KINDLE ISRAELI DESIRE FOR SOME PROGRESS ON WEST BANK, WE BELIEVE IT IS MAXIMUM BOTH PARTIES CAN BE ASKED TO MOVE ON NOW.

6. IN PRESENTING WRITTEN GOJ RESPONSE TO ISRAELIS, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD EMPHASIZE ABOVE GOJ CONCERNS. WE WILL MAKE CLEAR THAT WE HAVE DISCUSSED PROBLEM THOROUGHLY WITH HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOJ, INCLUDING DIRECTLY WITH KING HUSSEIN.

JORDANIANS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE LEAKS AND EFFECT ON THEIR RELATIONSHIPS IN THE ARAB WORLD ON THE ONE HAND, AND ON THE OTHER, SEE NO PRESENT NEED FOR COORDINATION WITH ISRAELIS THAT CANNOT BE FILLED THROUGH U.S. GOOD OFFICES. WE PLAN TO STRESS FOR GOI THAT COMPROMISE NOW ON 25 MCM FIGURE WOULD BE SEEN BY GOJ AS SIGNIFICANT EVIDENCE OF GOI GOOD WILL. ON SUCH BASIS, WE SHOULD BE WILLING TO ASSURE GOI THAT WE WOULD BE WILLING TO CONTINUE TO PRESS GOJ TO UNDERTAKE DIRECT TECHNICAL TALKS (PARTICULARLY IF GOI CAN ASSURE SECURITY AS IT HAS IN THE PAST) TO COVER ISSUES SUCH AS ADDASIYE WEIR CONSTRUCTION AND WATER RELEASE SCHEDULES WHERE FACE-TO-FACE TECHNICAL CONTACT SEEMS TO US TO BE MORE NECESSARY. WE WILL ALSO STRESS THAT GOI REVERSION TO 40 MCM FIGURE FOLLOWING
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LAST MAY MEETINGS HAS MADE GOJ LOSE CONFIDENCE IN FACT THAT ISRAEL IS DEALING WITH THE ISSUE IN GOOD FAITH.

7. AFTER MEETING WITH GOI NEXT WEEK, WE PLAN TO REVISE WORKING PAPER IN ORDER FURTHER TO NARROW DIFFERENCES AND ATTEMPT TO FIRM UP UNDERSTANDINGS REACHED. REVISION WOULD BE PRESENTED TO BOTH SIDES IN HOPES OF GAINING THEIR ACCEPTANCE AS A BASIC AGREEMENT ON THIS.

8. IF DEPARTMENT/AID HAVE ANY COMMENTS ON GOJ PAPER AND OUR REACTION, WOULD APPRECIATE CABLE PRIOR NOVEMBER 21 MEETING. PLEASE REPEAT INFO CON. GEN. JERUSALEM FOR TAUBENBLATT.
PICKERING

SECRET

NNN

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